

City of Norman
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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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The City of Norman announces a Ribbon Cutting on Thursday, September 24th at 4:00 p.m. for the New Compost Facility located at 348 Bratcher Miner Road (south of Highway 9 between Jenkins and Chautauqua). The new compost facility contains almost ten acres with six acres of the site devoted to windrows. The new facility replaces the former compost facility that was only about five acres in total with only one acre for actual composting. The larger site will provide ample room for customer pick up and drop off of materials providing better vehicle safety for customers and workers, allow staff to produce a better quality of compost by providing more working area and management of materials and should increase the availability of finished compost. By having a much larger working area for actual windrow, the old problems of stockpiling materials will be significantly reduced thereby reducing the potential for generating odors. The former location will be converted to a sanitation container maintenance facility.

The construction cost of the new compost facility was \$1.8 million. The site contains a looped water system consisting of six and four inch water lines along with a booster pump station that supplies irrigating water to the many large rain guns which provide proper moisture to the curing compost. The new site also has a maintenance road around the perimeter as well as security fencing and a new paved entrance.

“Creating value out of what was once considered waste is the essence of green infrastructure and sustainability,” said Mayor Cindy Rosenthal. “That is good for the environment and good for the economy”. In the recently completed Citizens Satisfaction Survey, eighty-six percent of the residents surveyed were satisfied with the Yard Waste Service of the Sanitation Division. Nationally, yard waste can account for up to 20% of all garbage generated; and in the summer months and early Fall this percentage can rise to as much as 50%. Here in Norman, the Compost Facility reduces the amount of waste going to the landfill by over 10% on an annual basis. Norman’s compost facility processes an average of 18 million pounds of materials each year. This reduces landfill fees, extends the life of the landfill and makes a valuable product from waste. While often overlooked when thinking about recycling, this compost facility makes a huge positive impact on the environment.

The City of Norman was the first city in Oklahoma to initiate separate collection of yard waste and provide a compost operation. The original compost facility opened in October 1990.

City Sanitation staff collects yard waste once a week from Norman residents. Green wastes and other yard wastes from commercial landscaping or yard service companies are accepted at the compost facility at no charge. Grass, leaves, shrubs, and tree limbs two inches in diameter delivered to the facility are ground into mulch by a tub grinder. Larger diameter tree limbs, trunks and root balls are not accepted.

The ground mulch is mixed in the correct proportions (nitrogen to carbon or green waste to brown waste) to aid decomposition and laid out in long rows called windrows. Initially, the windrows are about six feet high and sixteen feet wide. Windrows are kept moist with the aid of spray irrigation and mixed by turning them over three times each week. The heat generated by the decomposition process raises the internal windrow temperature to approximately 130 degrees Fahrenheit. During this time, the volume of mulch is reduced about 50% as the mulch decomposes. Composting involves the aerobic biological decomposition of organic materials to produce a stable humus-like product. The entire process is complete in 90 to 120 days.

“The opportunity to include recovery of a natural resource will help our city to be a winner when it comes to waste diversion and environmental protection” stated Ken Komiske, Director of Utilities.

Compost, when available, is free to the Citizens of Norman. The first batch of compost will be available Saturday, September 26th. For this compost release date, the hours of operation will be extended to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call the Sanitation Department at 329-1023.